

## Kashmir Decks Up For Mega New Year Celebrations

Auqib Javed

**Srinagar:** Thousands of tourists from the country and abroad are expected to assemble at the prominent hill stations of the Kashmir Valley, including the world famous ski-resort of Gulmarg to celebrate the New Year, despite the bone chilling cold.

Officials told Kashmir Observer that hotels in the hill stations of Gulmarg and



Pahalgam have achieved 90 percent occupancy, a week ahead of the New Year. The bowl shaped Valley of Gulmarg

**WE HAVE ORGANISED A WINTER CARNIVAL IN GULMARG ON DECEMBER 25.** Events on New Year eve have also been planned at both Gulmarg and Pahalgam tourist resorts."

is attracting more tourists because of its snow covered slopes and breathtaking landscape.

The Khyber Himalayan Resort & SPA, has also reached

100 percent occupancy with almost all 80 rooms in deluxe and luxury categories, besides the 5 cottages booked in advance by the travellers.

"Almost all the rooms at the Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa have been already booked, Ranjeet Dhar, Corporate Associate Director, Marketing and PR, told Kashmir Observer.

Unlike the past few years when the entire world was grappling with Coronavirus pandemic, Dhar said this year the tourist footfall was very heavy in Kashmir Valley.

"As for New Year, we have planned a host | [More on P10](#)

## Waqf Bans Photos, Videos At Hazratbal Shrine

Press Trust Of India

**Srinagar:** The Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board has issued an advisory asking visitors not to take photos or videos of the revered shrine of Hazratbal here without permission.

J-K Waqf Board chairperson and BJP leader Darakshan Abdrali has issued posters of the order which were put up around the shrine on Wednesday.

The diktat comes | [More on P10](#)

### NEW LAND LAWS

## LG Defends Move, Says Some People Misleading Public



Press Trust Of India

**Jammu:** Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday threw his weight behind the Union Territory's new land laws, saying some people were trying to mislead the public about the changes.

The new land laws are in line with those in other parts of the country, he said.

"The rule of law is in place in the country and the rule of law will be ensured in Jammu and Kashmir as well.

"A large number of changes were made in the land laws in Jammu and Kashmir to benefit the public as the older ones were regressive," Sinha said at a press conference here.

Asked about the outrage in Kashmir over a government directive to land leaseholders to return possession | [More on P10](#)

- New Laws Would Hardly Affect 400 To 500 People
- The Backbone Of Terrorism Has Been Broken
- Action Will Be Taken Against Anyone Who's Part Of The Ecosystem, Irrespective Of His Field Or Profession."
- G20 Preparatory Meeting In Srinagar Will Be Held In Secure, Peaceful Atmosphere
- J&K Will Witness Over Rs 70,000 Crore Investment In Coming Years
- Admin, Central Govt Will Decide Who Will Stay In J&K And Who Will Not
- Almost All KP Employees Transferred To District Headquarters

## Kashmir Shivers As 40-Day 'Chilla-i-Kalan' Begins

Press Trust Of India

**Srinagar:** Kashmir's harshest winter period, 'Chilla-i-Kalan', began on Wednesday with the mercury dropping several notches below the freezing point in many places including Pahalgam, which recorded the lowest night temperature at minus 6.2 degrees Celsius, according to officials.

Several places in Kashmir witnessed their coldest nights of the season so far. The fringes of many water bodies, including the Dal Lake here, froze as did water in taps, the officials said.

Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of minus 4.2 degrees Celsius last night, they said.



The famous ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Kupwara, minus 4.2 degrees Celsius in Qazigund and minus 2.4 degrees Celsius in Kokernag. The meteorological department has forecast mostly dry weather in | [More on P10](#)

### Coronavirus Comeback

## Govt Assesses Preparedness Of Health Dept To Tackle Covid-19

Observer News Service

**Srinagar:** The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Wednesday reviewed health department's preparedness for early detection, isolation, testing and timely management of suspected and confirmed cases to contain outbreak of Coronavirus variants, in the wake of alert issued by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The review meeting was convened by Secretary, Health and Medical Education, Bhupinder Kumar here on Wednesday in which all Head of Departments of Health and Medical Education Department besides other concerned participated, an official spokesperson said.

While discussing strategies to tackle the pandemic, the Secretary, he said,

emphasized the need of ensuring a strict vigil over the situation besides keeping ready the infrastructure and requisite supplies to tackle with any such cases.

Kumar, he said, also reviewed in detail the available infrastructure, machinery and equipments including the status of testing capacity, availability of COVID essential diagnostics, COVID drugs and Oxygen Generation Plants.

"Secretary instructed the Principal Government Medical College Jammu and Government Medical College Srinagar to ensure genome sequencing machines are installed and operationalized immediately in both the Medical Colleges to perform genome sequencing of all COVID positive cases," the spokesperson said.

The Secretary, he said, also asked the Managing Director, JKMSCL, to ensure that | [More on P10](#)

## Youth Have Left Path Of Violence, Destruction: DGP

Press Trust Of India

**Srinagar:** Once a hotbed of militancy, the Tral town in south Kashmir's Pulwama district is "almost free" from violence and has become an abode of peace and prosperity now, the union territory's police chief Dilbag Singh said on Wednesday.

He said the youths of the area have shunned the path of violence and destruction

"Tral has become an abode of peace now. An atmosphere of development and prosperity has been established again here like in other areas. Tral is almost free from militancy and I want to congratulate the people for that," Director General of Police Dilbag Singh told reporters in Tral.

Many of militancy's poster boys, including Burhan Wani and Zakir Musa, hailed from Tral area.

Without naming anyone, Singh said those who took the path of militancy, never returned to their homes.

"I congratulate the youth that they have shunned the path of violence and destruction and are now treading the path of peace and prosperity. I want to tell them that this is the right path and they should not be misled by anyone to take up the wrong path because those who trod the wrong path, faced immense difficulties, and did not come back," he said. | [More on P10](#)





## State Election Commission

Nirvachan Bhavan Jammu  
Jammu and Kashmir



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### Turning 18 on 1st January, 2023 or before

- Not registered as Voter in Panchayat Electoral Roll even though you turned 18 on or before 1st January, 2023
- If your name is missing or if you want to enrol for the first time or if you need to change/modify your details, Contact Panchayat Election Booth Official (Panchayat Secretary)

#### HOW TO APPLY

All forms are available with the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) and Panchayat Election Booth Official (PEBO)

Forms may also be downloaded from website of State Election Commission (secjk) at [secjk.nic.in](http://secjk.nic.in)

Submit filled-in application forms along with necessary documents to concerned PEBO (Panchayat Secretary)

#### Revision of Panchayat Electoral Roll with 1st January 2023 as qualifying date

#### REVISION SCHEDULE

Publication of Draft Panchayat Electoral Roll in Form PER-1	Period of filling of claims and objections for addition/deletion/corrections/transposition	
21.12.2022 (Wednesday)	21.12.2022 (Wednesday)	18.01.2023 (Wednesday)

#### WHICH FORM TO BE USED

FORM PER-2A

For New enrolment

FORM PER-2B

For Deletion of existing name

FORM PER-2C

For correction of particular

FORM PER-2D

For transposition/shifting to other panchayat hatqa

Special Camps at the polling Booth Location. (The Panchayat Election Booth Officials (PEBO i.e. VLW/MPW/GRS) along with the assembly BLOs; shall remain available at the polling Booth locations with the requisite Forms and Draft Electoral Roll for the guidance of the electors.

31.12.2022 (Saturday)	01.01.2023 (Sunday)	07.01.2023 (Saturday)
08.01.2023 (Sunday)	14.01.2023 (Saturday)	15.01.2023 (Sunday)

Disposal of Claims and Objections by ERO

Till 30.01.2023 (Monday)

Publication of Final Panchayat Electoral Roll

10.02.2023 (Friday)

Visit Website of State Election Commission, Jammu and Kashmir for other details

### SHORT TAKES

#### Highway Reopens After 15 Hour Closure

**Jammu-Srinagar** highway, the only surface link connecting Kashmir Valley with the outside world, reopened after remaining closed for over 15 hours following a major stone-slide near Dewal Bridge in Udhampur and blasting in Banihal, officials said on Wednesday.

"From 20-12-2022, 1700 hours to 1700 hours on 21-12-2022, Jammu-Srinagar highway remained blocked for 12 hours 32 minutes due to stone slide near Dewal Bridge (Udhampur) and for 4 hours and 30 minutes due to blasting at Kishtwari Pather (Banihal). However, both the blockage overlapped with each other and the cumulative time remained 15 hours | [More on P10](#)

#### BSF Shoots Down Drone Carrying Drugs

**A** Pakistan drone that reportedly dropped drugs into India along the International Border in Punjab was intercepted by BSF troops following which it fell on the other side, a senior officer said Wednesday. The drone was "downed" by Border Security Force (BSF) troops around 7:20 pm on Tuesday and it has been taken away by the Pakistan Rangers, he said. The incident took place near the Daoke border post in Amritsar. The drone was seen lying 20 metres inside the Pakistan territory opposite Indian border post Bharopal when the area was searched on Wednesday morning. The troops later | [More on P10](#)

#### Abducted Samba Girl Found In Pune

**A** minor girl allegedly kidnapped last month from Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district was found in Pune and her abductor arrested, police said on Wednesday. The girl had gone missing on November 16. When she did not return from school, her family members launched a search for her but the girl could not be traced. Her father lodged a complaint at Bari Brahmana police station, they said. During the investigation, it was discovered that the girl had been kidnapped by an unidentified person and a kidnapping case registered. Finally, she was recovered from Pune in Maharashtra | [More on P10](#)

DIPK-NB-5703/22 Dated:21/11/2022



## DC Holds Public Grievance Redressal Camp At Check-Sangri

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Enduring efforts of Administration to reach out to the common masses living in the rural and far flung areas of the District to address their grievances, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Wednesday undertook an extensive tour of Check Sangri area in Khonmoh Block of the District and held a Grievance Redressal Camp under Weekly Block Diwas programme.

The tour was conducted to bring Administration at the door steps of people for on spot resolution of public issues and demands.

The Grievance Redressal Camp was attended by a large gathering of locals, besides representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions viz. DDC member, Sarpanchs and Panchs of the area who projected their grievances and issues before the Deputy Commissioner including macadamization of Check Sangri road, infrastructure upgradation of High School Sangri, playground for local youth, separate water pumping station, deployment of Staff for Boys Middle School, waiver in electricity tariff for BPL consumers, improvement

in mobile network connectivity and other issues.

After giving patient hearing to the grievances and demands of the PRI members and other individuals, the DC sought on the spot response from the concerned District Officers present during the Grievance Redressal Camp. He assured the people of Check Sangri and other areas of Khonmoh Block that all genuine demands and issues projected by them will be looked into on priority.

The DC also gave on the spot directions to the concerned Officers for time bound redressal of the public issues.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner said on the directions of Lieutenant Governor, the District Administration is holding such grievance redressal Camps to take appraisal of local issues from the general public for precise and on-ground assessment to ensure their time bound redressal. He said such programmes also provide feedback to the Administration to developmental plans as per proposals of the local populations for the public good and reach to the doorstep of the people instead of them visiting the DC office or other Government Offices.

## In A Bid To Support Local Businesses, Youth Develops Software

Agencies

Srinagar: A 20-year-old youth from Srinagar has developed WebiPe – a software that provides back-end support for local businesses, start-ups, entrepreneurs and many international websites.

Hailing from Srinagar's Lal Bazar area, Fayiq Ahmad, an engineering student, has done his schooling at Green Valley Educational Institute.

Fayiq said he discovered his passion for web development at the age of 15. He used to spend his spare time learning programming languages by himself and working on small projects for local businesses.

In no time, he gained a reputation as a skilled and reliable developer, and his client base began to grow. In order to meet the increasing demand for his services, Fayiq decided to turn his passion into a full-time career and started his

own web development company. Over the next few years, his company thrived.

"I have created many websites and have provided back-end support to many start-up ideas. I also helped many people to open their business by providing them with support for websites," the young software developer told KNO. "I make websites and web pages, and also provide SEO support to many locals as well as international clients."

His clients contact him through WhatsApp, e-mail and the official website.

"It's my dream to be a top-notch developer, and for that purpose, I will work very hard and make my parents very much proud," Fayiq said. "I would like to request the youth of the valley to gain tech skills without wasting time. It will make them self-sufficient in the face of rising unemployment". (KNO)



People warm themselves on the first morning of Chillaal Kalan on Wednesday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

## Artisan Weaves Pashmina Carpets To Revive Dying Craft

Agencies

Srinagar: An artisan from Srinagar is trying to revive the centuries old traditional art by making Pashmina carpets. Shahnawaz Ahmad Sofi son of Gul Mohammad Sofi, a resident of Rathpora Eidgah Srinagar is currently working on a 9x12 feet single knot Pashmina carpet to be completed in 30 months.

Shahnawaz that his family is into carpet weaving and that is how he developed keen interest to learn the art.

"Despite pursuing a degree in fine arts, I got job opportunities but decided to infuse some new life in this dying art by bringing new techniques and changes in it," Sofi said. "When I decided to make Pashmina carpet, everyone was apprehensive as there was no idea about its market. Initially I started with weaving wall hangings with verses from the Quran inscribed on them", Sofi added.

He said that Pashmina carpet as per historians were being made in Kashmir some 300-400 years ago but the craft vanished later.

"At present, I am working on a 9 feet x 12 feet single knot pashmina carpet and four weavers are on the job. It will take us about 30 months



Despite pursuing a degree in fine arts, I got job opportunities but decided to infuse some new life in this dying art by bringing new techniques and changes in it

to complete the carpet. Once completed, it will cost around 50 lakh," he added.

He said that Pashmina carpet is a delicate work and takes time to complete with all knots of pashmina making it a luxurious piece.

"I believe that demand of any art won't go down anytime if artists will learn about market demands, designs, colours and new patterns," Sofi added.

Traditional things would not be in demand for long unless innovative changes with time are not brought, he added. (KNO)

## Waqf Board Bans Unauthorised Photography At Hazratbal Shrine

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar- The Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board has issued an advisory asking visitors not to take photos or videos of the revered shrine of Hazratbal here without permission.

J-K Waqf Board chairperson and BJP leader Darakhshan Andrabi has issued posters of the order which were put up around the shrine on Wednesday. The diktat comes close on the heels of Anjuman Auqaf Jamia Masjid in the old city prohibiting men and women from sitting together in the park of the mosque.

The chairperson of the board could not be immediately contacted for a comment.

## Dog Menace Continues To Haunt City Dwellers

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As authorities fail to put an end to dog menace in Srinagar, city dwellers find it hard to venture out during morning and evening when the public movement is thin. The presence of dogs on every nook and corner of the city has left people up in arms against authorities for not being able to put an end to the menace.

Over the last few years, the population of stray dogs has increased manifold in Srinagar. The unchecked rise in the dog populace has become a nuisance. People find it difficult to venture outside their homes particularly during morning and evening hours. City dwellers say that they can't venture out alone due to the fear of dogs. Although authorities say they are working hard to make the city smart, the ground reality is altogether different.

Earlier, speaking to Kashmir Observer, Dr Tawheed Ahmed Veterinary Officer, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) said Dogs are seasonal breeders and they mate twice a year. They give birth to sixteen puppies a year, most of them survive. The availability of non-vegetarian food is the main reason for their breeding. Garbage dumps on the roadsides provide them with more than enough food.

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**HIGHWAY STATUS**

- Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
- Mughal Road - (Open)
- Srinagar-Leh - (Open)

 <b>HIJRI CALENDAR</b> 27 Jumad al-Awwal <b>1444</b>	<b>PRAYERS</b> FAJR 6:03 ZUHR 12:28 ASR 3:49 Magrib 5:30 ISHA 6:55
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### This Day In History

- 1790 - Supposedly impenetrable Turkish fortress of Izmail stormed and captured by Suvorov and his Russian armies during the Russo-Turkish War (1787-1792).
- 1807 - US Congress passes Embargo Act, prohibiting American ships from trading in all foreign ports, as a result of involvement in hostilities between France and Britain.
- 1810 - British frigate HMS Minotaur sinks killing 480
- 1814 - Samuel Marsden of the Church Missionary Society arrives in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand to establish the country's first mission station; Sheep, cattle, horses and poultry are introduced.
- 1849 - The execution of Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky is called off at the last second.
- 1851 - The first freight train is operated in Roorkee, India.
- 1882 - 1st string of Christmas tree lights created by Thomas Edison
- 1890 - Cornwallis Valley Railway begins operation between Kingsport and Kentville, Nova Scotia.
- 1915 - Organized baseball & Federal League sign a peace treaty at Cincinnati.
- 1917 - Flanders declares its independence, under Pieter Tack
- 1930 - Convention of Economic Rapprochement/Oslo Agreements signed between some European countries in response to the Great Depression.
- 1939 - 99 die in 2nd wreck at Friedrichshafen Germany
- 1940 - World War II: Himaré is captured by the Greek army.
- 1941 - Japans invasion leader lands on Luzon, Philippines
- 1941 - Tito establishes 1st Proletarian Brigade in Yugoslavia
- 1942 - World War II: Adolf Hitler signs the order to develop the V-2 rocket as a weapon.
- get permission to use synthetic rubber for baseball core.
- 1950 - 2 self-propelled trains of Long Island RR collide, killing 77.
- 1956 - Last British & French troops leave Egypt.
- 1963 - Official 30-day mourning period for President John F. Kennedy ends.
- 1963 - Cruise ship Lakonia burns 180 miles north of Madeira with the loss of 128 lives.
- 1964 - First flight of the SR-71 (Blackbird).
- 1971 - UN General Assembly ratifies former Austrian President Kurt Waldheim as Secretary- General.
- 1971 - USSR performs underground nuclear test.
- 1972 6.25 earthquake strikes Managua Nicaragua, 12,000+ killed
- 1974 - 2nd cease-fire between IRA & British; lasts until approx April 1975.
- 1974 - Referenda in Comoros-3 islands for independence, 1 stays French.
- 1974 - Iraq announces plans to increase its oil production capacity.

### From KO Archives

## Kangri Claims Its First Victim

Observer News Service

Srinagar-With the new millennium a leap allay, Kashmiris still have to cling to a kangri, thanks to the 'development' the place has witnessed.

One Mohammad Sultan Lone of Lal Bazar, Srinagar died here last night after his kangri over-turned while he was asleep. Police believes that smoke from the smouldering bedding suffocated the man to death.

Lone, a government employee went to bed taking a kangri to warm up his bedding. He fell asleep and during the night hours the kangri over-turned, setting his bedding on fire. The smoke that accumulated in the room is being cited as the apparent cause of his death. Police Station Soura has started investigations into the matter.

The family members came to know about his death only in the morning hours when they went up to his room to enquire as to why he had not woken up. They found him dead in the burnt out bedding. He had also suffered some burn injuries

(Kashmir Observer, 22 December, 1998)



## Police To Conduct Verification Of Migrants, Pony Operators In Katra

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Police will conduct verification of migrants, pony operators and others in and around Katra, the base camp for the pilgrims visiting Vaishno Devi shrine, to keep a check on suspicious elements, officials said on Wednesday.

Police have been directed to conduct joint security drill with central para military forces and other intelligence agencies for security of the shrine, they said.

The directions were given by Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Udhampur-Reasi range Mohd Suleman Choudhary during a security review meeting of Mata Vaishno Devi shrine at Katra on Wednesday.

The senior officer stressed upon verification and census of migrants in and around Katra, pony porters and others to check the entry of any suspicious element in the area.

He further directed to conduct regular checking of hotels and other accommodations and verification of identity of those staying there.

Choudhary reviewed the security drill of the shrine, yatra route, and steps taken to ensure safety of pilgrims visiting the shrine.

A huge rush of pilgrims is likely to visit the shrine in the coming days especially on New Year's Eve on December 31. Therefore, the officials should cooperate and coordinate with each other to avoid any untoward incident, he directed.



## DAP's Core Agenda Is Development: Azad

Several Prominent Citizens, Youth Join DAP In Jammu.

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Ghulam Nabi Azad, the Democratic Azad Party Chief & Former Chief Minister on Wednesday said that his party has development as its core agenda that is inclusive and pro people.

While meeting with various delegations in Jammu Mr Azad said that DAP is a political platform that envisages a development of the UT while taking all sections of society on board. "We are pro people and want development of the region that benefits its people," he told the delegations. On the occasion various prominent faces from Doda district, Marh & other areas from Jammu Province joined the party and took resolve to reach out to the masses and inform them about DAP's political agenda. Mr Azad also met the youth delegation who joined the party on the occasion. He said India is a country with majority of its youth population. "No political party can afford to ignore this majority population and grow. DAP has decided to have representation of youth since it is our future," he told the youth delegation.



Azad further said that to strengthen the secular values in Jammu, its youth share the major responsibility. "Jammu is a city with rich socio-cultural values. It accepts and welcome people from all communities, religion and cultures due to which its economy is growing. Our youth have a responsibility to strengthen this spirit and our party workers will lead from the front," he said. He told the delegations whenever the elections in Jammu Kashmir are held, our workers will have to lead from the front for a change and ensure DAP is winning with thumping majority to form the government to protect the jobs and land rights for locals. He said no fight can be fought and won if it is not led by youth. "Our youth have a major role in social and economic transformation and India's future is relying on its youth unlike other countries," he said.

## Two USG Centres Sealed In Anantnag

**ANANTNAG:** Authorities on Wednesday sealed two USG centres in Seer Hamdan area of South Kashmir's Anantnag district.

An official said that action was taken on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Anantnag after a video had gone viral on social media.

He said that a day before a patient had visited one among two centres for USG where doctors reported that the patient has appendix, however, on operating nothing was found.

The official said that soon after the incident attendants protested and their protesting video in which they were demanding strict action against the centre went viral.

He said that on Wednesday

a team from the CMO office along with BMO concerned raided two USG centres and sealed them.

BMO Mattan Dr Mohammad Ashraf told a local news agency KNO that two centres were sealed as the qualifications of the doctors present at centres wasn't matching the required qualifications as per PCPNDT act.

He said that one doctor posted in Pulwama was seen in one centre and his details have been shared with higher ups for necessary action.

He said that at other centre, there was a Sonologist, however, he wasn't a government and all details have been shared with administration for necessary action.

## Winter Vacation In Courts From Jan 2

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The High Court of J&K and Ladakh on Wednesday announced winter vacations for 15 days in subordinate courts in Kashmir Valley, some districts of Jammu as well as Ladakh from January 2.

"It is notified for the information of all concerned that the Subordinate Courts in Kashmir Province and the Courts located in District Kishtwar; District Dada; and Courts located at Batote, Gaol, Banihal and Ukhral in District Ramban and Bani in District Kathua of Jammu Division in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

as well as all Courts located in the Union Territory of Ladakh shall observe 15 days winter vacations with effect from 02-01-2023 to 16-01-2023 (both days inclusive)," reads a notification issued by Sanjeev Gupta, Registrar Judicial.

"The Principal District and Sessions Judges and Chief Judicial Magistrates of the concerned Districts shall make the suitable arrangements for disposal of urgent criminal business arising during the period of such vacations in the areas within their respective jurisdictions," the notification, a copy of which lies with NS, added. (GNS)

## Gadkari, LG Reviews Progress Of National Highway Projects In J&K

Observer News Service

**NEW DELHI:** Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Nitin Gadkari and Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha held a review of the ongoing National Highways projects in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday.

Union Minister of State, General (Retd.) V.K. Singh; Union Minister of State, Jitendra Singh, and Central & UT officials were also present in the meeting, an official spokesperson said.

After a detailed discussion, he said, the meeting finalized the design for the upcoming Inter Modal Station, Katra. It will improve the travelling experience of pilgrims visiting Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine and provide better infrastructure and mobility to the citizens.

The spokesperson said that the meeting also reviewed the ongoing National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) & National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL) projects in J&K UT and steps have been



taken to resolve various issues related to projects.

Keeping in view the tourist influx at prominent tourist places like Sonamarg during the winter season, and also to ensure uninterrupted connectivity to the locals, the meeting deliberated upon the measures to keep Sonamarg open for the public in winters.

Giving special impetus to surveillance and monitoring of vehicular movement, NHAI & NHIDCL will install CCTV cameras on its highways.

NHIDCL's works related to Shri Amarnathji Yatra were also reviewed and directions

were passed for the completion of the ongoing works to ensure smooth and hassle-free pilgrimage.

The Lt Governor said J&K administration is giving utmost priority to infrastructure development in the Union Territory and various steps are being taken for timely completion of ongoing projects.

"The priority of a self-reliant Jammu Kashmir is modern infrastructure and modern connectivity. Our prime objective is to create facilities for people to ensure sustained economic growth and social upliftment," the Lt Governor said.

## Pole Orders Strict Action Against Drug Traffickers Under NCORD

'SUKOON Helpline For Counseling Of Mental & Drugs Victims Becoming Popular In Valley'

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole Wednesday while reviewing progress under Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan said that SUKON Helpline 1800-180-7202 for Mental & Drugs victims counseling is becoming popular in Valley.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, Director School Education, Director Health Services of Kashmir, Director ULB, Deputy Commissioner Excise Department, AD, Information Department, Incharge Divisional Control Room, HoDs and officers of various departments including RDD, Colleges, Drug Control & Wakf Board.

The meeting deliberated over the actions to ensure eradication of illicit crop production, clamp down on drug traffickers and counseling and



treatment of substance addicts. Addressing the meeting, Div Com directed DCs for strict action against cultivators of illicit crops and take strict action against drug traffickers under NCORD.

For rehabilitation and treatment of drug addicts, he asked for enhancing performance of Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) centers in districts. Besides, he asked for the sharing of information about ATFs among the people and directed for quantitative analysis of their functioning.

Meanwhile, Div Com sought compliance of the circular issued by his office in which PRIs, VLWs, Patwaris and Anganwadi workers were asked to report information of suspected substance users in their areas. Pole exhorted on wide cir-

ulation and publication of success stories of rehabilitated drug victims.

He directed for participation in TV programmes by doctors, professors and other experts to share their advice, knowledge and suggestions on the policies of Nasha Mukh Bharat and drug de-addiction.

Moreover, Wakf Department was asked to loop in the services of Molviys, Khateebis and Imams in eradication of drug consumption and educating the people about the drug menace.

Further, Div Com stressed on running the IEC campaign on drug de-addiction, SUKON Helpline, ATFs, symptoms of substance use etc in Education institutions, Health institutions and besides on mainstream and social media.

## Sinthan Pass Open To Tourists On First Day Of Chilai Kalan



Observer News Service

**ANANTNAG:** In a first, Sinthan Pass has been kept open for tourists as well as locals on the first day of Chilai Kalan.

The move is aimed at promoting winter tourism in Kokernag and providing motorable conditions to the people of far-off areas.

Speaking about the development, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag Dr Basharat Qayoom said that promotion of winter tourism is a priority area and steps like these are aimed at inviting tourists to explore beautiful destinations at such times in the year when

they are usually inaccessible.

He said that winter tourism festivals are also planned in all three important tourist destinations of Pahalgam, Kokernag and Verinag and preparation for these are underway.

SDM Kokernag, Er Sarib Sahran said that in Kokernag several such tourist friendly initiatives are being held throughout the year. He said that focus on promoting tourist activities in high altitude areas like Margan and Sinthan top has pushed them to take proactive measures like these.

He said that in collaboration with the Tourism Department steps are underway to create hospitality facilities in both

these areas. He added that the road also helps maintain connectivity of Jammu and Kashmir divisions when NH44 is blocked due to adverse weather.

It is in place to mention that Sinthan Top is a mountain pass, a popular tourist destination located between South Kashmir's Breng Valley (Sub-District Kokernag) in Anantnag district and Chatroo in Kishtwar district of Chenab Valley.

Historically, the route to Sinthan remains closed for most of winter, however, this year, due to continuous efforts by Revenue and NHIDCL the road has been kept open in November and December.



## SCERT's 2-Day Workshop On FLS-NAS Aimed At Designing Interventions Ends

Farooq Shah

**SRINAGAR:** A two-day workshop organised by the Educational Research and Survey Assessment (ERSA) wing of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) on Foundational Learning Study (FLS-NAS) report aimed at designing interventions based on the findings of the NCERT's Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) survey concluded at its regional office here at Bemina on Tuesday.

A total of 1008 students of Grade-3 from 112 schools across all the 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir had participated in the three-day nationwide survey on 23-26 March this year.

The objective of the survey, as per a statement from the Ministry of Education, was to conduct a large-scale assessment of the foundational learning of grade 3 students to establish a baseline for the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat mission.

The survey helped in establishing reading proficiency benchmarks for fluency with comprehension for each of the languages being assessed under the study and provided the data for sustainable development goals (SDG 4.1.1), covering aspects of foundational literacy and numeracy.

The survey's results were documented, and the deficiencies that were identified were forwarded to the states and UTs so that they may take appropriate corrective action.

The SCERT's expert team, comprising Dr Nazneen, G H Reshi, Basharat Ahmad and Riyaz Ahmad Dar, held thorough sessions explaining the findings of the survey to about two dozen resource persons drawn from all 10 districts of the valley, helping them design the interventions needed to address these deficiencies, with the aid of digital presentations, survey literature distribution, and by inviting experts from outside.

## 3 Injured In Bear Attack In Rajouri

**JAMMU:** Three men were injured, two of them critical, when a wild bear attacked them in Rajouri district on Wednesday, officials said.

The incident took place in far flung Kotcharwal village.

Two of the injured have been referred to Government Medical College (GMC) at Jammu in

critical condition, they said.

As per locals of the area, the victims were in their fields when a wild bear appeared from nearby bushes and attacked them.

The injured have been identified as Mohd Munshi (55), Buttu (35) and Abdul Rashid (30) - all resident of Kotcharwal.

## Govt Forms Panel On Waste Management In J&K

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The Government on Wednesday ordered the constitution of a Committee for Centralized Single Window mechanism for planning, capacity building and monitoring of waste management in Jammu and Kashmir.

Headed by Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary) Agriculture Production Department, as Chairman, the six-member committee comprises of Administrative Secretary, Jal Shakti Department, Administrative Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department, Administrative Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department, Administrative Secretary, Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment and Administrative Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

According to a government order, the terms of reference for the committee among others include "to bridge the gaps in solid & liquid waste generation and treatment, shortening

the proposed timelines, and adopting alternative and interim measures."

Besides it is to formulate and execute restoration plans for all districts, cities, towns and villages in a time bound manner and also formulate the District Environment Plans through the concerned agencies with authentic and updated database for policy making and execution of projects.

It has been also tasked with to review the Sewage treatment facilities adopted in terms of septic tanks/soakage/pit/FSTP in all the ULBs of UT of J&K in light of extant guidelines of MoHUA, Gol.

The committee's reference also includes to formulate a policy for prevention of untreated discharge of sewage into water bodies and recycling used water for agricultural and industrial purposes.

## KASHMIR OBSERVER

Thursday | 22-12-2022

### Fresh Covid Alert

New variants of the Omicron strain have fuelled a massive surge in Covid infections in China. The nation, which gave up its zero Covid strategy early this, reported seven deaths in the last two days due to the virus. Chinese cities are currently hit by the highly transmissible Omicron strains. Other countries which are witnessing largescale outbreaks of Coronavirus are Japan, United States of America, Republic of Korea, and Brazil. Globally, Around 35 lakh fresh cases are reported weekly. The situation, however, is more serious in China where crematoriums are struggling to deal with an influx of bodies.

This has also alarmed India forcing the Centre on Tuesday to urge all states and union territories to increase genome sequencing of Covid-positive samples to enable the timely detection of newer variants if circulating in the country. The union government has called for early detection, isolation, testing, and timely management of suspected and confirmed cases to detect and contain outbreaks of new SARS-CoV-2 variants. It has unveiled a five-fold strategy of test-track-treat-vaccination and adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour to restrict the transmission of the coronavirus.

Since the outbreak in China is likely to lead to further mutations, and given the size of China's economy, the United States has warned the rest of the world should be concerned about it. And there is an urgent need for the world and the individual countries to get serious about the challenge. However, India has a reason to be happy about the fresh Covid numbers: The country recorded 112 new Covid cases on December 20 and active cases fell to 3,490, according to Health Ministry data. This shows that the pandemic is on its way out in the country. But the example of China has come as a warning that the virus is very much among us. And if we continue to ignore observing the SOP, the pandemic could once again blow up in our face, just like it did in January-February 2021, killing thousands of people.

The continuously mutating sub-variants of the Omicron virus could in time trigger yet another wave. So people have to continue to take care. It is too soon to abandon the masks or give up the use of sanitizers. The SOP remains as relevant as it did when the pandemic broke out in early 2020. Meanwhile, we can celebrate our triumph on the Covid pandemic with the least number of Covid cases and fatalities to date. In Kashmir too, the drastic reduction in Covid cases is a cause for celebration. It is also a boon for tourism which has witnessed a bumper year so far with over one crore people visiting the union territory. But at the same time, we can't afford to let our guard down.

#### OTHER OPINION

### Elon Musk, Get Off The Soap Box

Considering that this is the man who kicked off one of the more tumultuous chapters in the history of Twitter with a poll — "Free speech is essential to a functioning democracy. Do you believe Twitter rigorously adheres to this principle?" (March 25, 2022) — Elon Musk's turn to vox populi on the question of his role at the social media company was only surprising for one reason. Few expected him to risk a "yes" verdict. "Should I step down as head of Twitter? I will abide by the results of the poll," the billionaire tweeted on December 18. When the poll closed, 57.5 per cent of the 17.5 million votes were in favour of "yes".

If one of the defining characteristics of the internet age is user-generated content, then Musk's chaotic leadership of Twitter has been, as they say on the internet, "peak Web 2.0". In the weeks since he got behind the wheel of the company on October 27, Musk has veered from one controversy to the another — mass layoffs, reinstating Donald Trump's account, launch of paid verification, followed by its rollback — generating enough content to keep the commentariat busy for months to come. Almost all of this has played out in public, on Twitter, frequently fueled by Musk's own tweets.

It is possible that the polls — whether to bring back Trump and other users who were "deplatformed" before his takeover or whether to restore the suspended accounts of journalists who had allegedly violated Twitter policies — are meant to turn the platform he owns into the public square he claims it is. If that is indeed the case, it might help for Musk to loosen his very firm grip on the megaphone and get off the soapbox. As it stands now, whether he remains CEO or not, Twitter seems to be turning into a one-man show.

Indian Express



Feature image caption: Students create a 'rangoli' to spread voting awareness ahead of upcoming Gujarat Assembly elections, in Ahmedabad on November 17, 2022. | Photo Credit: PTI

## Gujarat Takeaway

Despite being in power for over eight years, the BJP remains untouched by anti-incumbency

RIYAZ WANI

For now, Congress can take heart from the victory in Himachal. It can put some wind in its sails as it prepares for the Assembly elections next year. The party currently rules in Chhattisgarh, Himachal and Rajasthan. It remains to be seen whether the party retains Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan. Its performance in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh will be also keenly watched

The outcome of the Assembly elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh and that of the MCD polls in Delhi has been a mixed bag: The BJP expectedly won Gujarat with a landslide majority, Congress surprisingly triumphed in Himachal and the AAP in Delhi. The scale of the BJP's victory in Gujarat, securing 153 out of 180, has overshadowed those of the Congress and the AAP. The BJP even won the seat at Morbi where the bridge collapse in the run up to the polling day killed over 140 people. This has, once again, underlined for one and all the extent of entrenchment of the saffron party in the state, and for that matter, in many other parts of the country. And this makes the result of the 2024 general elections almost a foregone conclusion. The BJP could end up achieving a bigger win than it did in 2019.

However, the outcome of the ten Assembly polls scheduled to be held before the 2024 general elections will be equally important. Among them the elections in Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana will be very crucial. The BJP will hope to win all of them. But should the party suffer reverses in the majority of these states, this may not bode well for its 2024 chances. The elections in these five major states represents the last chance for the opposition to hurdle back into the reckoning.

It appears, however, very unlikely that the BJP may not do well in the upcoming Assembly polls. Despite being in power for over eight years, the party remains untouched by anti-incumbency. So much so, that the governance issues seem to hardly matter as Morbi episode yet again demonstrates. The over-arching political persona of the prime minister Narendra Modi

seems to trump everything. Either the Congress or the combined opposition are hardly in a position to mount a credible challenge to the BJP. Or so it seems.

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's attempt to unite opposition has so far met with a very little success. In the current climate, all parties want to go their own way. Congress has so drastically shrunk in recent years that it is struggling to retain its position as a national party. The AAP is trying hard to step into the breach. And it has achieved some significant success in this. The party already rules Delhi and Punjab and has made some inroads in Gujarat, qualifying it as a new national party.

But along the way, the AAP has become too ideologically-aligned with the BJP to be a seamless successor to the Congress. And this makes it more a threat to the BJP than the Congress in the long term. That is, if the AAP casts itself more in the BJP's image. As of now, the AAP is showing a tendency to remain ideologically-ambivalent, veering towards either right or left according to its electoral convenience.

Though the Congress has also indulged in soft Hindutva, the drift of its politics has been by and large secular. But it is also true that in recent years the party has become apologetic about secularism, lest it be seen as Muslim appeasement in the country. With Rahul Gandhi's padyatra, however, this may be changing. Congress has finally shown some assertiveness about pursuing an inclusive political agenda. Based on the public response to the yatra so far, the message seems to have had some impact, albeit its electoral implications are still uncertain. For now, Congress can take heart from the victory in Himachal. It can put some wind in its sails

as it prepares for the Assembly elections next year. The party currently rules in Chhattisgarh, Himachal and Rajasthan. It remains to be seen whether the party retains Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan. Its performance in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh will be also keenly watched.

Together, the outcome of the Assembly polls will be a bellwether for 2024. In case the BJP suffers major reverses in the states, it could apparently face an uphill climb in the national election. But not necessarily. In the run up to the 2019 election, Congress had put up a stiff resistance to the BJP. In 2017 Assembly polls in Gujarat, the party secured 77 seats and subsequently won elections in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in 2018. As a result, the saffron party didn't appear to be a favourite to win the general election. Most optimistic prediction was that the BJP would return with a reduced tally, forcing it to stitch together a coalition government, a throwback to the one run by the PM Modi's predecessor Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

But then the Pulwama attack on February 14, 2019 changed everything. The military strike on Balakot that followed soon after and the consequent dog-fight hurtled the BJP back to the centre stage. The party swept to victory in the general election. So, going by the history of the past eight years, the reverses for the BJP don't mean the party won't come back stronger. As Yogi Berra famously said, it isn't over until it is over. The saying snugly fits the politics of the BJP phenomenon in present India.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The author is the Politics Editor at Kashmir Observer



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### The Needy Dying

Of late, making my way to the mosque, I chanced upon a woman; begging her heart out. Many men snuck past her. And no one bothered to take a look at her. It was as if she was a ghost; waiting there to haunt the people. She lay there; her eyes flitting here and there in hopes of finding a person who could give her a few bucks. But the people acted deaf, dumb, and blind. The scene was so pathetic that it would make your skin crawl.

Yet another tragic incident, a few days back, when a girl took her own life by diving into a river, and the reason again revolved around financial problems. Everyone living in different corners of the world does help the needy. But, when it comes to us, we avert our gaze from one. Even this cold season seems to have no significant impact on our minds as to under what conditions the needy would be living their lives. We have become out-and-out beasts.

That lady and now no-longer-alive girl aside for a moment, there are so many amputees, divorcees, orphans walking down the street, visiting our homes, mosques; but we almost never direct our gaze at them, or hang on their stories, or provide them with something adequate enough to bring smile to their faces.

We hardly ever make them feel lovable. We rarely are kind enough to them.

Anyways, the question again

arises; to where do they go when our blasted presence has dominated this piece of the planet wholly? Do we want them to break down in tears and invoke the Almighty to curse us or take them?!

If such incidents fail to shake our conscience and make us take concrete steps towards saving the destitute from dying, we are hardly human beings.

Peer Faizan Bashir

NATIONAL MATHEMATICS DAY

# On Ramanujan And His



**Firdous Ahmad Mala**

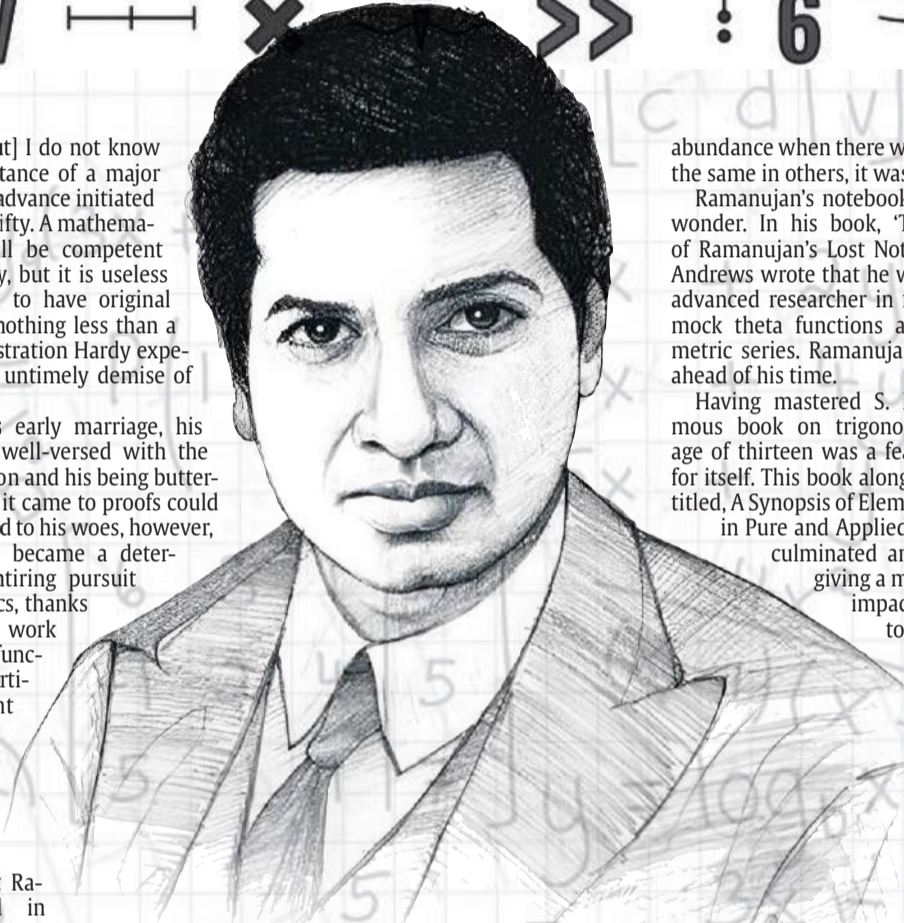
**T**HE national mathematics day has been celebrated every year since its inception a decade ago in 2012. It is now in double figures. The day is celebrated to pay homage to one of the finest, yet, arguably, the most “unrefined” Indian mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan, the one who is now popularly known as the man who knew infinity owing to the movie with the same title that made its first appearance half a dozen years back in 2015.

Ramanujan was born in 1887 at Erode in Madras and had the strongest and the strangest liking, which could be termed as obsession, for numbers and mathematics. The saga of how he made it to being elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society is inspiring, on one hand, and enervating, on the other. He was unrefined, unpolished and far from being properly educated. Yet he was one of his kind, unbelievable and far from the prosaic stuff.

Ramanujan's collaboration with G. H. Hardy left a lasting influence on both. When Ramanujan died at the age of thirty three, Hardy said something that appears indicative of Hardy's dissatisfaction and displeasure at being departed from Ramanujan. He said, “No mathematician should ever allow him to forget that mathematics, more than any other art or science, is a young man's game. Galois died at twenty-one, Abel at twenty-seven, Ramanujan at thirty-three, Riemann at forty. There have been men who have done great

work later; [but] I do not know of a single instance of a major mathematical advance initiated by a man past fifty. A mathematician may still be competent enough at sixty, but it is useless to expect him to have original ideas.” It was nothing less than a vent to the frustration Hardy experienced at the untimely demise of Ramanujan.

Ramanujan's early marriage, his lack of being well-versed with the formal education and his being butterfingering when it came to proofs could have only added to his woes, however, none of these became a deterrent to his untiring pursuit for mathematics, thanks to Hardy. His work on elliptic functions and partitions brought to light his acumen and the kind of intuition he possessed. If there was one thing that Ramanujan had in



abundance when there was a paucity of the same in others, it was his intuition.

Ramanujan's notebooks are another wonder. In his book, ‘The Discovery of Ramanujan's Lost Notebook’, Georg Andrews wrote that he was already an advanced researcher in fields, such as mock theta functions and hypergeometric series. Ramanujan stood much ahead of his time.

Having mastered S. L. Loney's famous book on trigonometry at the age of thirteen was a feat that speaks for itself. This book alongside the book titled, ‘A Synopsis of Elementary Results in Pure and Applied Mathematics’ culminated and resulted in giving a meaningful and impactful impetus to Ramanujan's life.

Some authors have likened his intimacy with numbers to that of Milton's mastery over

words. His famous response to Hardy about the latter's remark on 1729 being a number with not very interesting properties is indicative of how closely and deeply he was in love with numbers and mathematics. He is reported to have remarked that 1729 is the smallest number capable of being written as the sum of two cubes in two different ways.

There is a lot more to know about this pure mathematician, Ramanujan. The man who knew infinity, the book and the movie, besides Hardy's masterpiece, ‘A mathematician's apology’ are some of the sources to know more about Ramanujan.

The revolutionary, inspiring and somewhat mysterious life of Ramanujan came to a close when he was merely 33 in 1921.

Now that we are celebrating the national mathematics day, we must not confine it to mere celebrations and commemoration. Schools, colleges and universities need to inculcate in the students the kind of love Ramanujan had for mathematics. It would be no exaggeration to declare that knowledge of mathematics is an indicator of how progressed and advanced a society is. Ramanujan has left us a very rich legacy, the legacy of originality and that of unconditional love for research and discoveries. The legacy is to be capitalized upon and continued. An evident and prominent lesson we can derive from Ramanujan's story is that of singleness of purpose.

*The author is an Assistant professor Government Degree College Sopore*

**NOW THAT WE ARE CELEBRATING THE NATIONAL MATHEMATICS DAY, WE MUST NOT CONFINE IT TO MERE CELEBRATIONS and commemoration. Schools, colleges and universities need to inculcate in the students the kind of love Ramanujan had for mathematics. It would be no exaggeration to declare that knowledge of mathematics is an indicator of how progressed and advanced a society is.**

## Why Is Astronomy A Science But Astrology Is Not?

**Talia Dan-Cohen, Carl Craver**

**Are you sure astrology isn't a science?**

Both astrology and astronomy are in the business of making predictions. The theories of astrology claim that the positions of the planets and the stars influence who you are and what happens to you: your job, your personality and your romantic partner. Astrologers make these predictions based on the positions of the planets at the time of your birth.

Astronomy, in contrast, makes predictions about such phenomena as the movements of planets and the expansion of galaxies. Astronomers explain their predictions with such properties as masses, distances and gravitational forces.

As a philosopher and an anthropologist who study what science means to society, we think it is important to separate the question of whether something is a science from the question of whether it is true or false.

**Astrology makes scientific claims**

Science, in essence, involves making and testing factual claims about the world. Factual claims are true or false descriptions of the world (Joe is 1 meter tall) as opposed to descriptions of how we define things (1 meter is 1,000 millimeters). In this sense, astrologers, like astronomers, make factual claims about the world. To us, that makes astrology sound

a lot like a set of scientific beliefs.

For a very long time, until the 17th or 18th century, astronomy and astrology were practiced side by side. After all, knowing where the planets were relative to the stars was necessary to make accurate predictions about how their locations influenced human affairs. That's why astronomers and astrologers populated medical schools and governments, advising people on what the heavens signaled was to come on Earth.

Even famed astronomers Galileo and Kepler practiced astrology. Any rule that says they are scientists only if they make one set of factual claims but not when they make another set of factual claims divides these thinkers into two halves that aren't meant to be contradictory. In both cases, they wanted to know how things worked so they could predict how things would go in the future.

**Being false vs. being unscientific**

But here's the rub: When researchers test the predictions astrology makes about people's lives, those predictions turn out to be no better than guesswork.

There is currently no broadly accepted evidence that galactic forces are capable of influencing the choices people make. The truck parked on the street exerts more gravitational pull on you than Mars does, and the radio waves from your local station far overpower those from Jupiter, for instance.

There is an important difference between being

false and being unscientific. Currently, astrological theories are false precisely because they make scientific claims about the world, and those claims turn out to be wrong. Although the predictions astrology makes are false, they are nonetheless a matter of science. That's how we know they are wrong, after all.

Some people believe they find support for astrological predictions in their own personal experience. They read their horoscope and it seems just right: They did “meet someone interesting” or “benefit from listening to a close friend's advice.” But the predictions are vague enough that they would often be true even if astrology were utterly bogus. That's why it can be difficult to figure out how to assess an astrologer's predictions with precision.

Theories of astronomy, on the other hand, have evolved over the years with advances in technology. They are routinely corrected in response to increasingly precise measurements. For example, Einstein's theory of general relativity got a boost over Newton's because it predicted the precise migration of Mercury's closest point to the Sun year after year. If astrology had the same ability to make correct predictions with such precision, it might still be a major focus of scientific attention.

**Why is astrology still popular?**

But then why do so many people find astrology so useful if its predictions are not well founded? Why

are astrological signs and horoscopes so popular?

It seems that looking to the sky to make some sense of what's going on right now and what's going to happen in the future has appealed to a lot of different people at different times in history all over the world.

When it comes to what's commonly known as Western astrology, many people find their astrological sign to be a source of meaning in their lives. In fact, nearly 30% of Americans believe in astrology. It's one of many tools we have for telling stories about ourselves to make sense of who we are, why we are that way and why experiences that otherwise would feel meaningless and confusing seem to happen to us all the time. In this sense, astrology's success might be less about prediction and more about what it offers in terms of meaning and interpretation.

Among other things, astrology can be a useful prompt for self-reflection. It asks us whether we have traits typical of our astrological sign, and whether those we love have traits the theory suggests they ought to have. Thinking about our traits and relationships with the people around us is generally a good tool for understanding who we are, what we want to be and the meaning of our lives. Perhaps astrology is helpful in this way, independently of whether those traits are fixed by the stars.

*By arrangements with The Conversation*

# Study Reveals Why Humans Get Infected With Rodent-Borne Diseases

ANI

In a global study, researchers have identified that most reservoirs of rodent-borne diseases tend to live exclusively or occasionally in or near human dwellings, show large fluctuations in their numbers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has stressed the need to better understand the transmission routes of animal-spread diseases. The study demonstrates how the risk of pathogen transmission from animals to humans is driven by the interplay between natural and human-caused factors.

Rodents' "fast life" with sexual maturity at early age, many litters per year and numerous young per litter is an important explanation why rodents are important reservoirs for pathogens. But why do humans get infected by rodent-borne pathogens?

"Most rodents that spread zoonotic pathogens, meaning pathogens spreading between animals and humans, show large population fluctuations, move at least occasionally indoors, or are hunted for meat or fur. Our results were consistent among pathogen types i.e., virus, bacteria, fungi, and parasites. And with transmission modes, i.e., intermediate, involvement of vectors or non-close and close contact, with close contact including inhalation of contaminated aerosols," says Frauke Ecke, project leader and Professor at University of Helsinki, Finland and senior lecturer at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU).

## Global study on 436 rodent species

In the study published in Nature Communications, researchers from SLU, University of Helsinki and Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, USA, performed a global quantitative study based on data collected from research papers and databases. The study includes 436 rodent species of which 282 are all known reservoirs of zoonotic pathogens. The researchers studied the linkage among the rodents' choice of environment, variation in numbers i.e., population fluctuations, hu-



Most rodents that spread zoonotic pathogens, meaning pathogens spreading between animals and humans, show large population fluctuations, move at least occasionally indoors, or are hunted for meat or fur

mans' hunting of rodents, and the status of rodents as reservoirs.

"It is remarkable how consistent the results are among continents, disease systems and rodent species," says Rick Ostfeld, co-leader of the study.

Some areas of the world are riskier to get zoonoses from rodents

In addition, the researchers have identified regions where rodent-borne disease transmission risk between rodents and humans is high. Large parts of Europe, especially central and northern Europe, a wide stretch extending from eastern Europe to eastern Asia, eastern China, parts of South America, south-east Australia, and eastern regions in North America are at high risk.

"If people encounter a rodent in

these regions, there is a high risk that this rodent carries zoonotic pathogens," says Ecke.

Examples of such pathogen carrying rodents include the bank vole in Europe, the North American deer mouse, and Azara's Grass Mouse in South America. These species show large population fluctuations and can also move indoors.

"It is especially the large population fluctuations together with the disturbance of the rodents' natural habitat that can explain why rodents move nearby and into human dwellings. This movement behaviour is typical for so-called generalists, which are species that can cope with many different environments. These generalists are the most important reservoirs of pathogens," explains Ecke.

# Flying Snakes Help Scientists Design New Robots

ANI

Robots have been designed to move in ways that mimic animal movements, such as walking and swimming. Scientists are now considering how to design robots that mimic the gliding motion exhibited by flying snakes.

In Physics of Fluids, by AIP Publishing, researchers from the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech explored the lift production mechanism of flying snakes, which undulate side-to-side as they move from the tops of trees to the ground to escape predators or move around quickly and efficiently. The undulation allows snakes to glide for long distances, as much as 25 meters from a 15-meter tower.

To understand how the undulations provide lift, the investigators developed a computational model derived from data obtained through high-speed video of flying snakes. A key component of this model is the cross-sectional shape of the snake's

its body, the snake undulates side to side, producing a low-pressure region above its back and a high-pressure region beneath its belly. This lifts the snake and allows it to glide through the air.

"The snake's horizontal undulation creates a series of major vortex structures, including leading edge vortices, LEV, and trailing edge vortices, TEV," said author Haibo Dong of the University of Virginia. "The formation and development of the LEV on the dorsal, or back, surface of the snake body plays an important role in producing lift."

The LEVs form near the head and move back along the body. The investigators found that the LEVs hold for longer intervals at the curves in the snake's body before being shed. These curves form during the undulation and are key to understanding the lift mechanism.

The group considered several features, such as the angle of attack that the snake forms with the



body, which resembles an elongated frisbee or flying disc.

The cross-sectional shape is essential for understanding how the snake can glide so far. In a frisbee, the spinning disc creates increased air pressure below the disc and suction on its top, lifting the disc into the air. To help create the same type of pressure differential across

oncoming airflow and the frequency of its undulations, to determine which were important in producing glide. In their natural setting, flying snakes typically undulate at a frequency between 1-2 times per second. Surprisingly, the researchers found that more rapid undulation decreases aerodynamic performance.

# Researchers Ascertain Why Breast Cancer Survives Chemotherapy

Press Trust Of India

Researchers have found the reason why residual breast cancer survives chemotherapy and does not respond to immunotherapies, according to a study.

The researchers from the Tulane University in the United States have discovered for the first time how breast cancer persists after chemo and why immunotherapies designed to clear out the remaining tumour cells by revving up the immune system are not effective on such cancer.

Most forms of breast cancer are highly treatable, especially when detected early. But the last frontier cases remain the deadliest and the hardest to treat. Last frontier cases refer to those forms of cancer that cannot be treated with hormone or targeted therapies and that do not respond to chemotherapy.

According to the study, the process of surviving chemotherapy triggers a programme of immune checkpoints or regulators of the immune system. These checkpoints protect the breast cancer cells from being attacked by the immune system.

The process, thereby, creates a "whack-a-mole" problem for immunotherapy drugs called checkpoint inhibitors that may kill tumour cells expressing one checkpoint but not others that have multiple checkpoints, according to the study published in the Nature Cancer journal.

"Breast cancer does not respond well to immune checkpoint inhibitors, but it has never really been understood why," said corresponding author James Jackson of the Tulane University.



"We found that they avoid immune clearance by expressing a complex, redundant programme of checkpoint genes and immune modulatory genes. The tumour completely changes after chemotherapy treatment into this thing that is essentially built to block the immune system," Jackson said.

The researchers studied the process in mouse and human breast tumours and identified 16 immune checkpoint genes that encode proteins designed to inactivate the cancer-killing T-cells, the study said.

"We are among the first to actually study the tumour that survives post chemotherapy, which is called the residual disease, to see what kind of immunotherapy targets are expressed," said the study's first author, Ashkan Shahbandi.

The tumours that respond the worst to chemotherapy enter a state of dormancy called cellular senescence, instead of dying after treatment.

According to the researchers, they found two major populations of senescent tumour cells, each expressing different immune checkpoints activated by specific signalling pathways. They showed that the expression of immune evasion programmes in tumour cells required both chemotherapy to induce a senescent state and signals from non-tumour cells.

The scientists then tested a combination of drugs aimed at these different immune checkpoints. While the response could be improved, these strategies failed to fully eradicate the majority of tumours, the study said.

"Our findings reveal the challenge of eliminating residual disease populated by senescent cells that activate complex immune inhibitory programmes. Breast cancer patients will need rational, personalised strategies that target the specific checkpoints induced by the chemotherapy treatment," Jackson said.

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Subject: - Establishment of New Art Gallery at Stone Building Old Secretariat Srinagar.

Ref:- 1. This Office allotment No:-MW/2406-07/TD dated 20-11-2021.  
2. ADTs (S) Notice No:-MW/463/ADT dated 27-10-2022 and MW/547-49/ADT dated 07-12-2022

**FINAL NOTICE**

Whereas, the above named work has been allotted to you and the work have to completed by you within the 60 days prescribed time period as per terms and conditions of the e-NIT.  
Whereas, the work was supposed to be completed within stipulated time period, despite lapse of more than prescribed time period and have accordingly been issued a notice by the Asstt. Director Tourism, M&W, Srinagar referred above with the directions to resume the said work without any excuse or any further delay but you failed to resume the work till date.  
Now, therefore, in view of abnormal delay in the completion of the work, final notice is hereby served upon you to resume the work within 3 days time as notified to you by the Asstt. Director Tourism, M&W Srinagar in above mentioned notice from the date of issuance of this final notice, failing which it shall be presumed that you are not interested in execution of the said work and the same shall be put to fresh tenders at your risk and cost and your contract shall be foreclose without any further notice, besides the CDR deposited by you shall be forfeited, moreover you will be also debarred not to participate in the tendering process of Tourism Department for 02 years.

DIPK-15354/22  
DATED: 20-12-2022

Dy Director  
Tourism M&W Srinagar

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR  
**Office Of The Floriculture Officer Anantnag**  
**(Department Of Floriculture)**  
Tel. Fax: - 01932-294114 Email: - anantnagflori@gmail.com

**AUCTION - NOTICE**

The Floriculture Officer Anantnag invites bidders to take part in the open auction of wood lying at Club Park Pahalgam to be conducted on 26-12-2022 at 11:30AM at Wazir Bagh Anantnag. Therefore the interested bidders are requested to check the same personally well before the date of auction and accordingly take part in the open Auction.

Terms and condition:

- The starting bid for the said wood is Rs:10000/-.
- All the bidders have to deposit the HMD amount of Rs:-1000/- well before the conduction of auction.
- The successful bidder has to deposit the final bid amount in cash on the spot.
- During lifting of the auctioned wood, if there is any kind of damage to any person or property, the successful bidder will be personally responsible for that.
- The successful bidder has to lift the auctioned wood within weeks' time positively from the said Park and follow all the codal formalities.
- Auction committee has full powers to accept or reject the auction without assigning any reason thereof.
- Rest of the terms/conditions will be communicated on the spot of Auction.

No: FOA/FD/2226-32  
DIPK-15419/22 Dated: 20/12/2022

(Sadaqat Ah)  
Floriculture Officer  
Department of Floriculture Anantnag











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\*T&C apply

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